TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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These Papers

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council, the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue
No. 21
Published November, 1945

Church, Cooperative and Adult Education

DON F. PIELSTICK

• The significance of the rural church for the future of America has often been pointed out but it was most graphically stamped on my mind by some figures compiled by O. E. Baker, of the University of Maryland. He said that if you started with 10 adults in the city, in three generations you would have 3½ left. But if you started with 10 adults in the country, in three generations you would have 28 persons. (*Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin* No. 43.) The inevitable conclusion is that the future of America depends upon the character of her rural population.

Elkhorn's Churches

A study of Elkhorn, Wisconsin, in the fall of 1944 revealed that the churches of this community either were not conscious of this great responsibility or being conscious were helpless before it. Elkhorn is a rural community of five thousand people, evenly divided between village and farm.

Only about two fifths of those under twenty-four years of age were being reached with any kind of religious education. The only significant effort at adult education from the religious point of view was preaching. The effectiveness of this program can be judged by the fact that the religious situation has not changed appreciably since a former study in 1935.

Even the church finances have not kept pace proportionately with the community situation. The national figures show that farm income has increased approximately 400 per cent since the low in 1932. The income of the Elkhorn churches has increased only 10.1 per cent between 1935 and 1944. These figures seem to say beyond a question of a doubt that something is wrong with the educational and promotional approach of the churches.

Elkhorn's Co-op

While this was going on in the churches another very interesting development was taking shape in the community. In 1936 a consumer's cooperative was organized. Its able manager, Harry Frank, had at one time planned on the ministry and spent several years in theological studies. But to him these studies seemed unrelated to the urgent need of the common man.

The figures on the cooperative are not exactly comparable to those of the churches because the Cooperative does not confine itself to the Elkhorn community. Nevertheless, they are provocative. Organized in 1936, the cooperative showed by 1944 a membership of 1700, with a capital stock investment of $100,000 and the 1944 volume of business near $450,000. This was astonishing growth, while the churches held their own.

The Methods Used

The methods used by the cooperative to accomplish this success are methods which can readily be adapted to the program of the rural church.

1. The cooperative tackled a common daily problem of the majority of the people and interpreted to them how the cooperative economy could help solve that problem. Could not the churches tackle some such problem as social organization (the individual, the family, the community and the nation) (which is in the forefront of people's thought because of efforts at world organization) and show how Christianity could help solve that problem?

2. The cooperative did not wait for the people to gather in a great crowd to do its educating and promoting. It went to the people in small neighborhood groups. Could not the church be more effective if it went to the people? That is, let the worship service be an outgrowth of the need and interest discovered by the work done in the small neighborhood groups.

3. The cooperative poured forth a never ending stream of information in graphic outline, short pungent

articles and stories, vivid figures and comparisons, all of which portrayed the advantage of the cooperative economy. Could not the method of propagandizing for Christianity be patterned after such a system without compromising the faith?

There seems to be plenty of evidence that even the church people do not know how a Christian should take sorrow, meet trouble, express love, show a forgiving spirit or to put it simply, how to let the God of Jesus Christ have His way in our lives. This is the field of adult education left entirely open to the Church. Will we see to it that the task is done?

Churches Cooperate in Soil Conservation

• In a small proportion of the districts recently studied by the Soil Conservation Service, churches of many denominations are exercising a wide influence. Church recognition that their welfare and the well-being of man are closely associated with land resources is increasing. Church attendance and church contributions have, in a number of instances, grown in direct ratio to the conservation and rehabilitation of farm lands.

As a whole, members of governing bodies have not played a prominent part in arousing church men to foster soil conservation. In most instances, the start is made through the initiative of a technician of the Soil Conservation Service. In some instances he has given or prepared for the churchman an address or the facts from which the address is drawn. In some instances he has delivered addresses. In a few districts clergymen have worked out special conservation programs that have widely influenced members of the community.

A Pageant

For the most part initiative in this direction has been mostly exercised by rural churchmen themselves as they grasp the importance of land resources. Of course, the district activities have influenced such initiative. Dr. Joe H. Carter, a Presbyterian minister, living in Anderson, South Carolina, (Upper Savannah District) has written a pageant, "Giant of the Wastelands." This pageant shows the result of man's neglect of the land on which he lives and from which he lives; suggests ways in which man can resist the ravages of this giant of the wastelands; and concludes with a service of consecration of plants, seeds, and soil, a pledge to deeper loyalty, and a prayer for bountiful harvests with which to help in feeding and clothing the peoples of the earth.

Some assistance was given by the local district supervisors and others in the preparation of this pageant. It has been given by most of the churches in the district and interest has been expressed in its use throughout the Southeast. A great opportunity is at the door of districts in arranging active cooperation of churches and it seems probable that district supervisors will more and more become an influence in this direction.

The Inter-Racial Church

• Describing "the Church in its true nature" as "the divine community of all faithful people under one Lord transcending divisions of race, nationality, or economic class," a statement of Guiding Christian Affirmations adopted recently by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, declared that "it is, therefore a first responsibility of the Church to demonstrate within its own fellowship the reality of Community as God intends it."

"Any discrimination within the Church because of race, negates the nature of the Church," added the statement, which was prepared by the Commission on the Church and Minority Peoples.

Holding that "differences enrich and do not divide the body of society" the statement declared: "If one member, one group, one nation, one race, suffers from injustice or discrimination, sooner or later all the members suffer with it, and such suffering is judgment on man's pride and irresponsibility."

Church Cooperation in Finance

• Cooperation among the churches and interfaith groups, which has been accelerated through wartime services, will be continued and encouraged in the national United Church Canvass, November 18 to December 2, 1945. Churches of all denominations and creeds will cooperate in campaigns to increase church attendance, place the values of religion before the whole community, and conduct financial campaigns for current, missionary and postwar reconstruction budgets.

Charles E. Wilson, chairman of the General Electric Company, will head the national Sponsors Committee. The Rev. Dr. A. D. Stauffacher, executive secretary of the Missions Council of the Congregational Christian Church, will be chairman of the Planning Committee.

While the national office, at 297 Fourth Avenue, New York City, does not conduct individual local canvassers, it does aid in the supplying of promotional material, newspaper mats, radio transcriptions and multicolor posters on a cost basis.

Something's Growing at Grailville

STANLEY HAMILTON

• Many attempts have been made to transplant the Danish Folk High School to America. None has been notably successful. What we need, apparently, is an American counterpart of the folk school, something that grows in our own soil.

A School of Life

Near Loveland, Ohio, a suburb some twenty miles northeast of Cincinnati, the Society of the Grail, a lay Roman Catholic movement, has established a "school of life" for young women. The school is located in a 180-acre farm and housed in the old frame dwelling. There are twenty-five young women in residence, with ages ranging from seventeen to twenty-four. They come for a term of a year. Ten are from farms and small towns. Fifteen come from the larger cities. Most of them have been interested or selected through summer camps or short courses conducted by the Grail across the country. They know in advance about the nature of the program and are in accord with the philosophy. This makes for a ready adjustment.

The Purpose

Dr. Lydwine van Kersbergen, the Director, has stated the philosophy, in brief, as follows: "We are living in a great turning point in the history of the world. We as Christians know we are in the hands of God's providence. We must see our common goal first and strive to have Christianity survive. We need special schools for leadership training among the laity. The Catholics are establishing schools where short courses are given. Grailville offers a year's training in agriculture as a way of life. There are no certificates, degrees or credit hours and the school is not bound to a curriculum. Five principles form the basis of the school:

"1. A whole-hearted Christianity, encompassing all of life.

"2. The family is the basic unit of society and it is woman's one true vocation.

"3. A philosophy of work. Tasks are rotated and all share in them.

"4. A spiritual revival must go hand in hand with a rural Christian culture.

"5. Agriculture is a way of life."

The Day Begins

The day begins with the rising bell at 5:30. The girls walk a mile to the village church in Loveland for mass. After the services they walk back. Then they have breakfast. The household tasks, cleaning, food preparation and the outside work, gardens, care of the animals, chickens, etc., are shared and rotated. Where possible work is done in groups so that discussion may be carried on. Lunch is early and the noon-day work is over by 12. From 12 to 2:30 there is a period of silence. Then comes a two-hour period of work out-doors or on projects. There is a study hour from 5 to 6. The group collects and some may read aloud a passage from the Bible, an appropriate poem or another reading of special interest. Sometimes visitors are asked to speak during this hour.

All the meals are happy events. There are prayers of joy and thanksgiving. Following the evening meal there will likely be a number of songs, folk music and spirituals. The food is simple, delicious and well prepared. Very nearly all of it is produced on the farm.

What Is Different?

What is so different about this school? I was describing it to the dean of a Mennonite College. He said, "They are challenging their young people with a hard pedagogy and they love it. We have been using a soft pedagogy in our schools." Look again at the five principles which form the basis of the school. At Grailville are gathered twenty-five of the choicest young women I have ever seen. They are committed to Christian living and they rejoice in it as a blessing. They are training for farm life. They expect to have homes of their own in the country and they are preparing for home making as a career.

Grailville is not a convent. The girls and the staff are good neighbors. In the neighborhood lived an expectant mother who could not find anyone to help her as the time of confinement approached. Some of the girls went into this home and helped. There are other instances of good neighborliness and friendly sharing. Last autumn the girls helped plan and direct a community folk festival.

Training for Rural Life

Dr. van Kersbergen and three of

—The Congregational Church at Rio, Wisconsi

her girls have spoken at the Annual Conference of the Historic Peace Churches at Bluffton College, Ohio. The evening before the conference opened a young Brethren minister, a student at Bethany Seminary, asked me why these Catholic girls were on the program. I explained about Grailville and its significance as a special school. He asked if they would arrive in the morning. I told him that they had come in that evening and would be at the college chapel in the morning, remarking that when they came in nobody would have to point them out. The next evening Dr. van Kersbergen and the girls spoke, outlining their faith and their work.

All in the audience shared in a real religious experience. Walking back to our rooms in the village I asked one of the leaders in the Society of Friends what he thought about the evening program. He said, "I belong to the same church that those girls do. No Bishop and no Secretary is going to tell me that I don't." When we reached our rooms the young Brethren minister was waiting. He smiled and said, "I know what you meant. I saw them come in this morning and nobody had to point them out. Their faces shine . . . from within."

Something is growing at Grailville. It is worthy of our study and adaptation. Possibly it is an American folk school growing in Ohio.

Secretary on Leave

• Announcement has been made that Benson Y. Landis, executive secretary of the Committee on Town and Country and managing editor of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, has been released by the Home Missions Council and Federal Council for an indefinite period up to one year for the purpose of opening a new office in Washington, D. C., to be maintained by the Federal Council and cooperating bodies. The Washington office is to function as a center of information on pending legislation, on governmental regulations and on appropriate channels for contacts with government officials as requested by officers of church organizations.

Hymns of the Rural Spirit

• Here is the latest word on plans for the publication of a hymnal of approximately 128 pages to be known as *Hymns of the Rural Spirit:* The publisher will be the Commission on Worship of the Federal Council of Churches. The manuscript was compiled by a committee consisting of Mark Rich, Ralph L. Williamson, Clifford L. Samuelson and Deane Edwards.

Advance orders are being solicited at the following rates: 35c per copy, postpaid; 25 or more copies 25c each plus transportation; payment upon delivery and publication.

As this is written, orders for approximately 9,500 copies are in hand. It will be necessary for the publisher to have orders or guarantees for 20,000 copies in order to obtain the prices listed above.

The book will contain about 135 hymns and rural folk songs. A prospectus is available without charge on application to the Commission on Worship, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. Orders from local congregations during the next month will speed the publication of this book.

New Discussion Guide

• The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A., Washington 25, D. C., publishes a helpful pamphlet entitled, *Let's Talk About Farm Leases and How They Can Be Improved.* This guide will be of special interest to groups in areas where tenancy was on the increase before the war. The coming years may see a renewal of pre-war trends toward increase in tenancy or agricultural labor. On a national scale, tenant-landlord relations have much to do with what is happening to the land and to community life. It is important that local communities everywhere study these relations.

Copies of this guide may be had on application to your County Agent, State Extension Service, the United States Department of Agriculture Extension Service, or the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington 25, D. C.

Town & Country Church

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Remit to the Home Missions Council

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The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

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M. R. ZIGLER, Brethren Service Committee, Church of the Brethren.

BENSON Y. LANDIS, Secretary, Committee on Town and Country, Managing Editor. (On leave, 1945-46)

Wanted: A Rural Social Gospel

KATHLEEN W. MacARTHUR

ome time ago the governor of a ern state made the comment at every year many million dollars orth of good soil goes down the ississippi, washed off the surunding farmlands, lost and wasted the national economy. He added at the good work done on selecon of seed was in vain until the merican people paid equally carell attention to the kind of soil in nich the seed is to grow.

ving the Lost

At first glance one could not call is a religious problem, but if we ace the problem from lost and asted topsoil to lost and wasted ople, it immediately comes with the concern of religion. Since the nction of religion, at least in part, to save people from being lost and asted, this question of topsoil goes ght back to whether or not the rth is the Lord's, and to us as cusdians of the earth and its resourss. It makes a great difference what e believe at this point as to whethwe are responsible for preventing ss and waste of the earth's resourss, and responsible for the conservaon and use of them for the welfare the people.

It is a trite and over-worked reark, but one which we must conntly reiterate, however weary of that these are great and chalnging times to which we must ing a faith equal to the demands the challenge. "No small hope ll suffice," nor will a vague and ny faith.

ld Testament Prophets

The prophets of the Old Testaent stood in the social structure of eir time, for that justice and ghteousness only dimly perceived the rest. "Their power was the nmeasurable contagious power of e religious man who has gone into tion on behalf of his vision. . . .

"In the long history of the great ligions we get this recurring mirle of the mighty power of religion tually informing life and shaping ciety, when people are really connced."

Not the Old Testament prophets only, but among the early Christians and through the Middle Ages, we find notable examples of this. In modern times, the evangelical movement of the Eighteenth Century produced fresh evidence of this power. When John Wesley, filled with that same zeal for his fellowmen stood before the forgotten men of the mines and mills of England, they rose from their sub-human isolation and knew themselves to be men and believed in the miracle of human brotherhood. Many of the labor leaders of the industrial revolution learned their skill in public expression and leadership from the Wesleyan chapels where they first stood up and spoke among their fellows.

The Social Gospel Movement

Outstanding, too, in modern times was the Social Gospel movement, with its roll-call of mighty names, Kingsley, Chalmers, Peabody, Gladden, Mathews, Rauschenbush. The Christian ideal, under their courageous leadership, became ever more concretely and insistently related to the social and economic concerns of democratic living. The Social Ideals of the Churches is the living and still potent witness to their faith and labor. Yet the social gospel pioneers spoke on behalf of the industrial worker and the city dweller, and this gap grew wider until in the 1920's came the demand that the farmer be heard and heeded. If there was to be any reality to democracy in the town it demanded that the means for democratic organization of life be used in the

areas of rural life at rural problems also.

New and Great Demands

Today we stand once more in the presence of new and great demands. The times we live in demand a social gospel suitable for effective religious living today. We need not just historians of the social gospel, or interpreters of Rauschenbush, but leaders to take up the task where they left off.

The strategic point for taking up this task is the point where the interests and concerns of farm and city meet, and the life of the people of the nation is seen as a whole. The effective leaders will see also and definitely plan to renew the vital religious faith which will provide the common ground of conviction upon which all groups in the nation can meet to work out the common good.

Our need today is for leaders of great dimensions and deep compulsions, capable of encompassing in the wholeness of their view the concerns and values of all; farm, industry, commerce and labor, seeing all groups as essentially one, and with a keen sense of man's interdependence, and of the dependence of all upon God.

Making a Covenant

We shall fail unless we can quite simply and boldly make this covenant with our fellowmen and with God in complete faith that it can be done, and that we must do it. This is what Rauschenbush meant when he wrote: "We must begin at both ends simultaneously. We must renew and strengthen our religion in order to be able to change our economic system; we must change our economic system in order to preserve our conscience and our religious faith."

This is the faith for our day. It is the faith that will make, not only freedom from want, but all the freedoms, possible. It is faith in the possibility and the necessity of human brotherhood.

I close this comment with what seems to me a very striking and beautiful picture. There was, a writer* has pointed out, "a good deal of food in Galilee when the 5000 turned hungrily to Jesus. But he could bless only the loaves and fishes that were at hand. . . . This is the law of life. . . . It is a symbol of the recurring miracle of human brotherhood which multiplies and transcends itself whenever one man is ready."

Religious Department of Farm Organization

• The Farmers Federation, Asheville, North Carolina, is said to be unique among American farm organizations because it has a department of religion. The director is Rev. Dumont Clarke. Mr. Clarke has popularized the Lord's Acre method of financing rural churches.

We acknowledge the cooperation of the Farmers Federation in the furnishing of numerous glossy photographs which will be used in TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. Are there other volunteers who will send in good photographs? We will make copies, guard them carefully and return them to the senders.

Bob Zigler Abroad

• The Rev. M. R. Zigler of the Church of the Brethren is traveling in Europe in the interest of the foreign relief program of his denomination.

* Marguerite Harmon Bro in "Faith of the Free," ed. by E. W. Garrison.

A New Rural Hymn

• The following hymn has been written by the Rev. Edward [illegible] Hamner,, Washburn, Illinois, minister of the Disciples Ch[illegible] who is president of the Disciples Rural Fellowship. Mr. Hamner has not decided upon any one best tune for use with the lines. He prefers the tune by Mendelssohn, *Consolation*, found in many hymnals.

HERE ON MY NATIVE SOIL

Here on my native soil I live and labor,
Here, close to God and nature's wondrous ways;
Glad in my heart for land and home and neighbor—
Glad for the useful tasks that fill my days.

This is my task: To live and help another;
This is my destiny upon the sod:
That from its yield I feed myself and brother—
That I may give it back enriched to God.

Working with Him in common ways and lowly,
In field and woods and pasture land I love,
Knowing my work though humble still is holy
I bow my head and thank my God above.

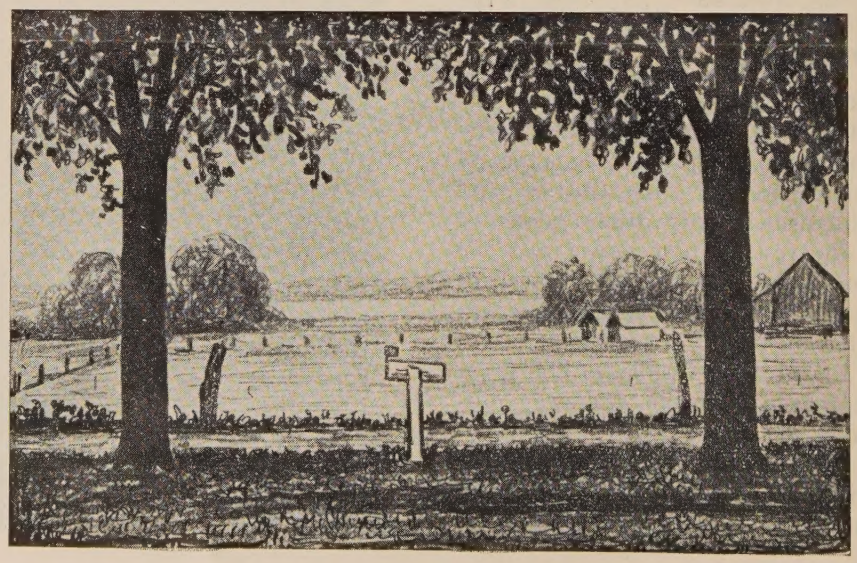
HEARTS UNFOLDING

This little kernel
Carries a miracle.

See hearts of wheat unfold
Into great tons of gold.

Into divine rich food,
For all the living good.

—*Rusticus*



Meeting of Committee on Town and Country

he Committee on Town and try, which publishes this paper, ntly met for four days in Philaphia. It is understood that the ion was the most thorough meet- ever held in the history of the mmittee since its organization in 2.

t was decided to hold the next ional convocation on the church Town and Country at Des ines, Iowa, Wednesday through day, November 6-8, 1946, proed satisfactory local housing argements can be made.

A committee was appointed to ke a re-study of the curricula of various summer schools for inice training for ministers in n and country churches. The irman is Rev. C. L. Samuelson the Protestant Episcopal Church, Fourth Avenue, New York 10, Y.

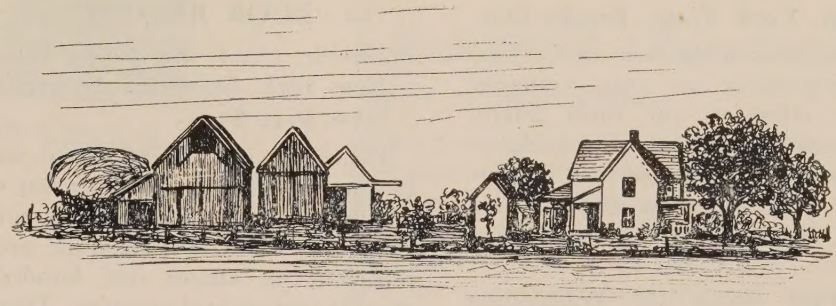
A standing committee on religious cation was appointed with Rev. win L. Becker of the Disciples of rist, 222 Downey Avenue, Indianlis 7, Indiana, as chairman.

The Committee heard addresses Albert Goss, Master of the Nanal Grange; Roger B. Corbett l Mrs. Charles Sewell of the erican Farm Bureau Federation; H. Bakken of Boy Scouts of Amer- and Rev. William L. Mudge, cutive secretary, Pennsylvania uncil of Churches. Mr. Goss ught many churches were ooty" in their attitude toward mers.

A special feature of the session s an informal joint conference h twenty officers of American m cooperatives who gathered m all parts of the country in er to spend an afternoon and ning with the Committee on wn and Country.

The Committee resolved to inssify its efforts in recruiting for rural ministry and offered to cerate with a new commission on ruiting being established by the deral Council.

t was announced that Rural Life nday would be observed May 26, 6, Rogation Sunday, the 5th after



Easter, or at the discretion of the local church on another Sunday in the spring of the year.

Action was taken to obtain second class entry for TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a regular monthly periodical to be published nine times a year, beginning January, 1946.

The Committee made plans to speed the publication of *Hymns of the Rural Spirit.* (See separate item in this issue.)

It was announced that a thorough report on the Church and Land Tenure would be completed soon by the Sub-Committee on Land Tenure of which Rev. M. R. Zigler, Church of the Brethren, is chairman and Dr. Joseph Ackerman of the Farm Foundation is secretary.

✠ In Thy goodness, O God, hast Thou enriched the earth and watered it abundantly. The pastures are dropping with plenty, the hills are girt with gladness, the meadows clothed with flocks, the valleys robed with golden grain. Thou hast blessed the soil and all that grows on it. Thou hast crowned the year with plenty. Therefore we joyously enter Thy sanctuary . . . with the offerings of our thanksgivings, with songs of praise to Thy name.

✠ We come into Thy courts, O God, not with the praises of our lips only, but with the pious resolves of our hearts to sanctify all these Thy gifts to the highest purposes. Thou hast put all things into our power, that we may apply them to the service of humanity, that we may ennoble our lives, and glorify Thee, the Creator of all.

✠ Thy love is boundless. It embraces all Thy creatures. From the little seed Thou callest forth the blossom and the fruit. So in the humblest soul the seeds of righteousness may blossom into the beauty of a noble life.

✠ Thou hast created abundantly for all our wants. Round about us Thy glories shine to enrich our hearts and ennoble our souls. Open our eyes that we may find delight in the endless wonders of Thy creation. O may we, in grateful acknowledgment of Thy bounties, extend the blessings we enjoy, unto others, and find the true wealth and beauty of life in deeds of benevolence and mercy.

✠ The abundance of Thy paternal blessings recalls to us the love Thou didst show to our fathers in the dreary wilderness: in their journey through the desert the wanderers found shelter from the scorching heat and the raging tempest. Thou didst sustain them in drought and keep them alive in famine. Therefore our souls rely on Thee. Thou art our support, our shield and our deliverer. We rejoice in Thee, and praise Thee, O God of love and of mercy. *Amen.*

—The Union Prayer-Book, 1895

Man's Relation to the Land

• The statement, "Man's Relation to the Land," published in full in September TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH has been widely reprinted in many periodicals and newspapers. Copies are still available from this Committee at the following rates: 3c for single copies; $1.00 per hundred; $5.00 per thousand.

The Committee on Town and Country has voted to make use of this statement, signed by seventy-five Protestants, Catholics and Jews, in connection with the 1946 Rural Life Sunday observance.

New York Times Breaks Out

• The issue of the *New York Times* for September 28, 1945 contained three editorials on rural affairs. They were on farm prices, decentralized living, and cattails in blossom. Seven or eight editorials on rural subjects have recently appeared.

Arthur Krock, the Washington correspondent of the *Times,* devoted his column on October 9 to President Truman's recent habit of spending his week-ends in rural communities. Mr. Krock concluded the column as follows:

"In the old Greek myth Antaeus drew his strength from the earth, and when, in the wrestling bouts to which he challenged every stranger they bore him to the ground, he arose refreshed and unconquerable. But along came Heracles, a strategist as well as a pachyderm. He held Antaeus high in his arms throughout the match until the champion, deprived of the contact with his native soil on which he depended to outstay all challengers, weakened and cried enough.

"It may be that here is a parable for the President in which it will not be too difficult to substitute other names for Heracles and Mother Earth. If so, perhaps it may be hoped that current pressure on Mr. Truman, unlike that of Heracles in the myth, will not prevail if the President refreshes himself, as he has been doing in the last few days, by getting back among the people and walking on the American earth and in the streets of the little towns. Should that be the effect, and here in Clarke County a good many think so, the absence from Washington will be well spent."

Is the Church a Problem to the Returning Veteran?

• The question we all should be asking these days is not what the returning veteran will be like when he returns to the church but what will the church look like to the veteran when he comes home. Will the church be a problem to him?

—The Newsletter of the Protestant Church Service Clubs, New York.

BOOK REVIEW

Plainville U.S.A. By JAMES WEST. New York, Columbia University Press, 1945. $2.75.

Plainville (the actual name and location are withheld) is a town of 250 population in the southern midwest. The town and its trade area represent an almost one hundred percent agricultural economy. There are no Negroes or other racial groups. Citizens brag that theirs is a town the highways have not killed. Questioned about social stratification they affirm, "We're all just one plain old class of common average working people." This is the community to which in 1939 James West (pseudonym) turned his skill as an anthropologist in an effort to determine the reaction of a relatively isolated farm community to the stream of traits and influences from cities and other agricultural areas.

West found Plainville in an agony of social and economic reorientation occasioned by the activities of federal farm agencies in behalf of scientific agriculture. And in spite of contrary protestations he discovered a clear pattern of social distinctions rigidly enforced. As one informant said, "With no Niggers or Catholics to hate about all we've got to hate is each other and the gub'ment."

About one-third of the Plainville people have no connection with the Christian, Methodist, Baptist, Brethren, and Holiness churches or the Russellite house meetings. Holiness manifestation has increased greatly. Each church draws its own particular social group. None of them supports a preacher more than one weekend in a month. No church has a program geared to community needs. Although half of its young people leave Plainville, no community institution prepares them for adjustment outside.

West has presented a disturbing picture of an agricultural community which has failed to develop functionally effective institutions. His study deserves the attention of those who would build a spiritually and socially vital rural church.

—GROVER L. HARTMAN

Contributors

• Don F. Pielstick is associate secretary of the Home Missions Council.

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Change of Address

• Experience indicates that many subscribers are failing to notify us about changes of address. If you are changing your address, please notify us promptly. A postcard will do.

Do You Know a Rural Artist?

• The editor of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH will be interested in receiving black and white drawings of rural scenes which may be reproduced and used in TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. They should be in a good black and white contrast so as to permit reproduction.

Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short items; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.

Circulars Available

• Quantities of circulars describing TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are available without charge to any reader.